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NEWS December 2014

Volunteer of the Month: **Bill Miller**



He's the chair of the Friends of the Lake Lure Flowering Bridge and the man who brought the idea of it our community in 2010. He leads the Board and is head LLFB champion, always encouraging

garden volunteers, frequently walking the gardens and meeting visitors and digging in the dirt or helping light the lamps himself. We are all proud to serve with Bill in this most happy endeavor.

Bill's Story: *I was created in 1940 in Massachusetts by George and Marian Miller. I lived there until 1960. At that time I was a student at North Adams State Teacher's College with some plans to be a history teacher. During summer work as a camp counselor near Lake George, NY I was surprisingly converted and called to ministry. The next day I decided to transfer to WV Wesleyan College to major in history and biblical studies. A month later, while washing dishes in the girls dorm I met Ellie, the sweetest girl I had ever known, who instantly became my best friend and the love of my life. Eleven months later we were married, which was 53 wonderful years ago.*

She helped me get college degrees from Wesleyan, Marshall University and Duke University. Together we served 40 years in Almost Heaven, West Virginia as a pastor, university chaplain, community organizer and denominational leader in the United

Methodist Church. Along the way we were blessed with three boys and a bonus. Our three sons and daughter are married and raising our 10 grand-children within three hours of Lake Lure. That is what brought us to this beautiful place.

We moved to Apple Valley in Rumbling Bald Resort in 2002 with a commitment to refocus our retirement life around "family, friends, fun and faith." We shared a desire to become community volunteers and use much of our time in community service and being with our family. We had no idea of which direction that would take us or the tremendous joy it would bring us.

In 2010, while returning from Asheville, I stopped in Lake Lure to view the construction of a new bridge across Rocky Broad River. For the first time ever I got to see the arched beauty of the old bridge, and immediately I saw it blooming in flowers, rising above the beautiful balustrades and hanging over its sides. On reflection I realized that this thought was inspired by childhood visits to the Shelburne Falls (MA) Bridge of Flowers. Immediately I made my first visit to Town Hall to share the vision. The rest of the story of Lake Lure Flowering Bridge is now the history of dedicated gardeners and community leaders, with much greater vision than I, creating a gorgeous, flowering pedestrian bridge to somewhere beautiful. Now I rejoice over those childhood trips with my parents as I walk the Flowering Bridge and see the impact of these special gardens on people from around the world. I love the Lake Lure Flowering Bridge and the members of the incredible team who created and maintain it.

Get Your 2015 LLFB Calendar



For a donation of just \$15, you can now have a 2015 Lake Lure Flowering Bridge calendar filled with beautiful photographs of the bridge and gardens. These make lovely holiday gifts for family and friends and remind them year-round to enjoy our special spot in the Hickory Nut Gorge. To order, email Janet Walters at gullahgal@gmail.com or contact any LLFB Board member.

LLFB Holiday Ornaments from Veryle Lynn Cox

For the third year, gifted Lake Lure ceramic artist Veryle Lynn Cox has given her time to create unique ornaments for our Christmas trees in honor of the bridge. The 2014 ornament features one of our lampposts complete with toys in the basket and gifts on the balustrade. For a



donation of \$25 each, these are available to add that special touch to your tree. Contact Sandra Nelson. Phone her at 828-625-1065 or 828-289-2214(Cell) or email Sandra at csnelson38@bellsouth.net. [Photo by Blaine Cox]

Veryle Lynn tells the story of making the ornaments:

In the world of creativity, the idea is the hard part. All summer I puzzled over the 2014 Christmas ornament. The design became clear in October when I looked up at the new lamp posts with Chimney Rock in the background.

Sizing my photograph to the right dimension, the design was traced onto clay and the details built up and sculpted. Two plaster molds were made of the clay design. Liquid porcelain (slip) was poured into the molds. After removing from the molds, the pieces were cleaned up and signed on the back. The ornaments were fired the first time, then Sandra Nelson, Marion Wilson, and Marta Campbell painted blue and purple on the mountains.

I painted the other colors and details: the faces were finished by using magnifying lenses and a 3-hair brush. After three coats of clear glaze and the second firing of 2185 F degrees, the ornaments were finished with a red ribbon for hanging.

Each ornament took at least one hour to make. I loved the entire process, love working with my friends, and I love the Lake Lure Flowering Bridge.

The Lake Lure Flowering Bridge is a National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat and a member of the American Public Gardens Association.

Pathfinder Bricks Now on View in the West Gardens

Thanks to our Pathfinder donors for their support and patience.

Their engraved bricks are now in a temporary location along the pebble path in the West Gardens. When

plans are approved and completed for this area, these bricks will move to their permanent location. Thanks to Danny Holland for getting them placed



in their current position. You can join Joe and Linda Carter and others to donate as a Pathfinder and designate the

engraving for your brick. More information and the form are on our [website](#). [Photos by Alice Garrard.]

WinterFest in the Gorge

LLFB lights and decorations are yours to enjoy as WinterFest goes on, concluding with the Polar Plunge at the Beach January 1, 2015. For more information, go to [WinterFest](#) online.



Get Your LLFB Auto Plate

Get a Lake Lure Flowering Bridge vehicle plate for your car for a donation of just \$10, wherever you drive.

To order, email us at llfb@bellsouth.net.



If You Build It, They Will Come



As our chairman Bill Miller pointed out recently, the Lake Lure Flowering Bridge is less than two olds, yet in that time, more than 70,000 visitors from 49 states, the District of Columbia and 31 foreign countries are estimated to have

enjoyed the beauty of our gardens. They have left messages in our guest books that we share here gratefully.

"Lovely garden – inspirational - very peaceful - loved it." (Hull, England)

"Lovely respite! And so creative. Loved hearing the birds and watching the butterflies." (San Francisco, CA)



"I live here. It's my first time to see this. I needed to start a healing process in my life. Today I began because of this spot. Thank you."

"Delightful! Love the gardens. This is my profession in Jacksonville, FL and you have done a spectacular job! Thank you!"

"Love it! Have travelled all 48 states – never one like this!"



"Truly magnificent garden – a retreat after a long journey. More than we ever imagined. Thank you for all of your efforts so that we could enjoy God's beauty."

"What beauty I found beside the road – a living memorial to all souls lost this day (9/11/14)"

"What a glorious garden! God's angels are at work -- and I bet you have the dirt under your fingernails to prove it."

"The tulips in Holland are beautiful but your Flowering Bridge is too" (from Holland)

"Coming from Germany and Austria – would say we've never seen such a wonderful place like this: beautiful flowers!"

"Quaint and whimsical garden with an elfish aura. Scenic and picturesque! Lovely!"

"Nice gardens! Have to come back again!" (Glasgow, Scotland)

"A little piece of heaven that I stumbled across without expecting it. What an inspiration!"

"If these gardens don't lift your spirits nothing will."

"Thank you volunteers for making this such a peaceful and tranquil place. Thank you! You make my heart sing."



Photo above by Blaine Cox

Other photos by Mike Lumpkin